

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY BONN

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TAGS: PFOR, OTRA, GW

SUBJ: DEPUTY SECRETARY/KOHL MEETING

1. SUMMARY: CDU CHAIRMAN KOHL DWELT ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY ON GERMAN DOMESTIC POLITICS IN FEBRUARY 13 MEETING WITH DEPUTY SECRETARY RUSH. HE SAW GOOD CHANCE OF 1976 ELECTORAL VICTORY FOR CDU AND WAS CAGEY ABOUT SCHEEL PRESIDENTIAL BID AND POSSIBILITY CDU-FDP COALITION AFTER 1976 ELECTION. END SUMMARY.

2. CDU CHAIRMAN KOHL SAW DEPUTY SECRETARY RUSH AT 12:30 FEBRUARY 13 AND CONTINUED DISCUSSION THROUGH LUNCH GIVEN BY DEPUTY SECRETARY. KOHL, WHO CAME ACCOMPANIED BY DOZEN OR SO PHOTOGRAPHERS, AS WAS CASE IN HIS MEETINGS WITH VICE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY, SEEMED INTERESTED ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY IN TALKING ABOUT GERMAN DOMESTIC POLITICS. HE CITED RECENT POLLS, ESPECIALLY THOSE SHOWING YOUTH SWING TOWARDS CDU, AND SAID THAT IF PARTY WOULD WORK HARD AND STOP FIGHTING BATTLES OF YESTERDAY, IT COULD WIN

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1976 ELECTION. AT SAME TIME, HE SHOWED GREAT RESPECT

FOR BRANDT AS VOTE-GETTER, SAYING THAT REGARDLESS OF FACT POLLS NOW SHOW CDU IN LEAD, CDU AND SPD AS PARTIES HAVE ABOUT SAME VOTING SUPPORT BASE, AND IT IS "BRANDT VOTE" WHICH HAS BROUGHT SPD VICTORY. KOHL SEEMED TO FEEL THAT BY 1976 BRANDT MAGIC MIGHT NO LONGER PLAY DECISIVE ROLE.

3. KOHL WAS CAGEY ABOUT SCHEEL PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY, SAYING HE HAD GREAT PERSONAL LIKING AND RESPECT FOR SCHEEL, BUT WAS HAVING SOME SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT HIM AS PRESIDENT BECAUSE OF HIS STRANGE LEFTWARD SLIDING ON CO-DETERMINATION, ALLEGATIONS THAT HE AND BRANDT HAD MADE DEAL ON POST 1976 SPD-FDP COALITION (WHICH KOHL SAID SCHEEL HAD DENIED TO HIM) AND HIS IDEAS ABOUT PUTTING MORE POLITICAL CONTENT INTO PRESIDENTIAL OFFICE. KOHL WAS EVASIVE ABOUT POST-1976 PROSPECTS FOR CDU-FDP COALITION, SAYING HIS PARTY WOULD HAVE TO CONSIDER THAT QUESTION IN REALISTIC POLITICAL TERMS WHEN TIME CAME.

4. HE TOUCHED BRIEFLY ON ENERGY CONFERENCE AND US-EUROPEAN RELATIONS, SAYING HE HOPED GERMANY WOULD NOT BE FORCED CHOOSE BETWEEN FRANCE AND THE US, BUT THAT IF CHOICE HAD TO BE MADE, IT WOULD UNQUESTIONABLY BE FOR ATLANTIC ALLIANCE. HE MENTIONED TROOPS IN EUROPE ISSUE ONLY IN TERMS OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN 153,000 AMERICANS AND GERMANS IN HIS OWN LAND, WHICH HE CHARACTERIZED AS EXCELLENT AND TREMENDOUSLY IMPROVED AS COMPARED TO TWO-THREE YEARS AGO.

RUSH

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